"ministry of the beautiful" had touched upon the finer chords of his nature, and by its influence had brought forth the brighter and nobler faculties of his soul and given higher aims to his existence. His physical wants supplied, the unfettered genius of his soul declared herself in all her majesty, and stamped upon his works that originality of thought and conception of which every branch of art and literature in the early stages of its advance, bears so striking an impress, "portraying," as the eloquent Allison says in his able essay on three master-minds of the earlier ages of the arts, "what they severally felt, undisturbed by fear, unswayed by example, unsolicitous for fame, they were unconscious of excellence, and each pursued fearlessly the path of his great career."

The majesty of architecture had now reached its climax: simplicity and refinement, purity and grandeur, qualities possessed by the highest degrees of excellence alone, were the distinctive attributes of the fourth age, and may well confer upon it the title of the age of architectural refinement. For a while let us carry our imagination to the shores of the Piræus, and silently reflect on all the glorious histories and events recalled by the noble monuments of antiquity around us, where each sculptured stone is pregnant with some mighty record of the past, where every mouldering pile bears silent testimony to the great and honoured dead whose names are hallowed by the veneration of centuries, and where the very soil beneath our feet is

"Haunted, holy ground."

Unenviable and dull, indeed, must be the feelings of him in whose mind is not awakened the spirit of the past by the old memories and associations these classic shores recal. The exquisite marbles of the sculptor Phidias; the stern, manly eloquence of Demosthenes; the noble intrepidity of Themistocles; sage, statesman, sculptor, warrior, poet, philosopher, and all, mingle in one mighty unity to give undying interest to the land. Again, we ask, does not this fourth age of architecture typify distinctly the social character of its epoch, and are not the records of that period in unison with its architectural features? We feel we cannot but answer in the affirmative, and we believe we have not erred in denominating it the period of architectural refinement; and is the era unmarked by any corresponding extension of the mind of man, by any advance in his social and moral position, or do his noble works in this age bear no testimony to his general progress, to the ennoblement of his nature, to the onward course which was ordained for him at his creation? Let the reader decide: we fear not for the result.

And now how great the change, how mournful, silent, desolate,

"Her cities waste, her mountains stern and lone!"

Arts and empire alike passed from her soil, her sons the by-word and reproach of nations. The age of classic, refined, Greek architecture has departed; but her sacred mantle, fallen on other lands, still retains some portions of its virtues. Great truths are ever the same, and whether they be the manifestations of religion, of art, or of science, they remain ever one and unchangeable under all circumstances and conditions: they are the bright lights which God has implanted in our nature to guide us on to happiness and lead us to all the perfection of which our nature is capable. They are, says Cowper,—

"The lights we walk by, kindled from above."

The love of that which is pure, and holy, and beautiful, is the acknowledgment of a great and noble truth, the silent soul-felt tribute of our spirit to Him who is the creator of all that is good and lovely, awakening the better and higher feelings of our nature, and teaching us to regard the welfare of every sentient being as essential to our own. The spirit of truth which breathed itself over the divine creations of the purest Greek art, was of a nature calculated to kindle the loftiest emotions, and to instil itself into every generous mind. It is this spirit of truth which has proved its surest safeguard and buckler against the ravages to which all that is mean and insignificant has successively fallen a prey; it is this spirit of truth which has ever held a silent sway over our nature, and which ruthless time itself has acknowledged and spared.

But the destiny of Greek grandeur now approached its accomplishment: she had enunciated mighty truths: it remained for them to take root and spread on other soils; to widen and extend their civilizing and ennobling influences. Torn by internal dissension and civil strife, Greece at length fell a prey to the all-conquering powers of Rome; but, conquered, subdued, and prostrate, her proud victors could not fail to acknowledge and to imitate her great and glorious truths.*

W. M. B.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

Horspath (*Oxfordshire*).—The church of this place was reopened on 24th ult. by the Bishop of Oxford. The greater portion of this church has been restored, and a new north transept added. It is in the Early English style. Mr. Edward G. Bruton, of Oxford, is the architect, and Mr. Cowley the builder.

Faringdon.—On Saturday week, during a heavy thunderstorm, the lightning struck the steeple of the church at Shellingford, near Faringdon, and completely split it in two. Part of the steeple, falling on the roof, forced its way through into the body of the church, and thereby did great damage to the edifice. There was no lightning conductor, as is generally the case in such circumstances, and now it will cost the expense of many lightning conductors to replace what the outlay of one such simple apparatus would have in all probability saved. It is said that a single fire sometimes causes a run upon the insurance offices: we hope that this "accident" will help to create a run forthwith upon lightning conductors. In the present instance the want even of a little paint to cover the metal-work of the vane is believed to have promoted the mischief.

Margate.—At a recent meeting of the Local Board of Health, a letter from Mr. Caveler, the surveyor of the pier company, was read by the clerk, to the effect that the plan and estimates were sent to the Board, but that the cost of construction considerably exceeded the original estimate, and altogether would amount to about 15,000*l*. The directors, it was said, must open the erection of the intended jetty to public competition, and the clerk proposed the formation of a committee of the Board to consider the plans and estimates, and all questions connected with them. The formation of such a committee was agreed to.

Bridgwater.—Since the presentation of the painted window to St. Mary's Church by the mayor, Mr. T. Ford, other gentlemen and ladies have promised also to place memorial windows in this church. A portion of the window in the west end of the south aisle is given by the pence of the poor who frequent the church. It is executed by Warrington, and the subject chosen is appropriately an illustration of the parable of the widow's mite. An effort is being made to procure a stained glass window for the chancel of Trinity Church, subscriptions for which have been raising for some time past, and a portion of the window has been put in with what money has been raised. From what we have ourselves heard of the portion done, we are quite prepared to quote the local papers, which complain of "the injudicious and hasty manner in which the part of the work done is executed, especially that part of it intended, we imagine, to represent the descent of a dove, but which partakes far too much of the appearance of the flight of a barn-door fowl. We hope this will be again taken out, and the design altered, the original of which we believe was bad, and ought not to have been copied from by the manufacturer."

Hay.—The High-street and Castle-street of this town, it appears, have assumed quite a new aspect of late, by help of the architect and the plate-glass manufacturer. Further improvements in these and other streets are spoken of.

Dudley.—A row of houses built on the Pensnett Chase, at Dudley, over the pit workings of the British Iron Company, have suddenly given way, in consequence of the ground, as it is technically called, "crowning in;" and the general opinion in the neighbourhood is that other misfortunes of a similar nature will occur.

Manchester.—The lightning, in a recent thunderstorm, has done serious injury to one of the Old Quay Company's warehouses, adjoining the Irwell, in Water-street. From an adjoining building rises the engine chimney, a square pyramidal erection of brick, of considerable height. The lightning struck this chimney, cutting off diagonally from north to south about 10 or 12 yards of the upper part of it, of which portions fell through the roof of the Victoria warehouse, breaking one principal beam, and through the flooring of the uppermost floor. Other portions fell upon the roof of the engine and boiler house, breaking its beams and rafters. There seems to have been a considerable projectile force from north to south; and the chimney thus struck is within a band or belt along the southern part of Manchester, along which, it is a curious fact, noticed by the local *Guardian*, that most of the serious injuries to life and buildings in this town have been caused by lightning during the last twenty years. This belt includes the Northumberland Arms Inn, on the Stretford-road, and the school and other places struck last summer, near the Chester-road, Hulme, as well as the cottages in Silver-street, in former years, and the warehouse of the Bridgewater Trust, near the viaduct, last year. Such a fact is well worthy of close investigation, as a discovery of the reasons or causes predisposing a locality to electric shocks might be of great importance in reference to the selection of sites for elevated structures such as spires and chimneys.

Carlisle.—The foundation-stone of a new bridge across the Caldew, connecting the Borough Mill Field with Denton Holme, was to be laid on Saturday last by the mayor. This bridge is to be built by subscription, at a cost of about 3,400*l*. It will be composed of three elliptical arches, 36 feet span each, and 32 feet between the parapets. The arches are expected to be turned in course of the year and the road to be opened early in 1853. Denton Holme, according to the local *Journal*, will by that time be studded with houses, as several streets have been projected, and some are already laid out. The vale of the Caldew, by these and other improvements, will be opened out for villa sites. Hitherto the value of Denton Holme has been about 150*l*. an acre, and it is said that already, for a site at the south end of the bridge, an offer has been made of 9*s*. a yard, or at the rate of 2,160*l*. an acre. One of the chief promoters of these improvements is the mayor, Mr. Nelson, who set out in life as a journeyman mason.

Glasgow.—Building, we observe, says the *Glasgow Herald*, is going on briskly all over the city and suburbs, both to provide dwelling-house accommodation, and an extension of the business establishments of the city. A stately three-story house, on the south side of Argyll-street, near the head of Jamaica-street, is in course of removal, and on its site will be erected, we learn, a fine structure for one of the most extensive of our wholesale houses, in what is termed the country trade. It has also been arranged to build up the whole of the vacant ground in Howard-street. Plate glass in a unique form will be employed in these Howard-street shops and warehouses, to an extent never before adopted in Glasgow. Under these circumstances, the resident masons are fully employed, and we are informed that additional hands would readily obtain work.

A ROMAN RAILWAY.—It is said that the surveys for the construction of a railway between Civita Vecchia and Rome are completed; that a company has been formed; and that it has already lodged the caution-money.

* To be continued.

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